

### STUDENT OBJECTIVES

- Identify tone in a work of literature
- Analyze tone in a work of literature

### RESOURCES AND PREPARATION

You will need photocopies for students of:

- **Student Lesson Summary**, p. 318
- **Teaching Model**, “Life Doesn’t Frighten Me,” p. 319
- **Practice Worksheets**, Levels A and B, pp. 320–321
- **Reteaching Worksheet**, p. 322

### Teach

1. **Tone:** Tell students that **tone** in literature means attitude—the attitude that a writer or speaker takes toward a subject. Use the following examples to clarify what tone means:
  - Ask students if they have heard someone say, “Don’t use that tone of voice with me!” Call on volunteers to suggest what tone of voice the speaker might be referring to. (*Sample responses: rude, sarcastic, disrespectful*)
  - Write on the board the following line of dialogue from a movie:

**EXAMPLE** She’s such a square.

Have students read the line and describe the tone of voice they use to read it expressively. (*Sample: snobby, contemptuous, rude, haughty, and so on*) Tell students that, just as an actor’s tone gives us clues about how to interpret the line, so a writer’s tone give clues about meaning.

2. **Teaching Tone:** Pass out the **Lesson Summary** and review the **Academic Vocabulary**.
  - Point out that tone in literature is similar to tone in speech: It is the attitude that a writer takes toward his or her subject.
  - Explain that determining tone is more difficult in literature than in spoken language because we don’t have the speaker’s voice to guide us. Instead, readers are like detectives looking for clues to tone in the text. Since all the distinct qualities of a work contribute to the tone, determining it can be difficult.
  - List the following key elements to consider when thinking about tone. For each element, have volunteers find an example to read aloud from their literature textbooks.

**EXAMPLE**

- direct statements about the subject
- descriptive and sensory details
- the way the author handles plot and theme
- the author’s diction or word choice
- figurative language and imagery

3. **Guided Practice:** Distribute copies of the **Teaching Model**, “Life Doesn’t Frighten Me” by Maya Angelou. Relate the **Here’s How** steps in the **Lesson Summary** to the **Teaching Model** to help students understand how to identify and analyze tone.

## TONE, CONTINUED

- **Direct Statements:** Have students read the poem silently, identifying any direct statements. (*Life doesn't frighten me at all; I go boo; I won't cry; I just smile*) Explain that direct statements are very useful in identifying tone.
- **Key Words and Phrases:** Ask students which words and phrases affected them strongly. (*Sample: I just smile / They go wild*) Tell students that the author chose each word carefully to convey a certain tone, or attitude.
- **Reading Aloud:** Have students imagine that the poet is speaking directly to them as you read the poem aloud. Then ask students to describe the tone. (*Sample: strong, confident, tough, sassy*) Ask if and how any sound effects in the poem helped convey the tone. (*Sample: The rhyme scheme and meter affect the tone, making it jazzy and funny. The repetition of the phrase "doesn't frighten me" emphasizes Angelou's admiration for the speaker's courage and makes the poem like a defiant song.*)
- **Analyzing:** Ask, What is the poem's message, or theme? (*Sample: freedom from fear is possible if you can convince yourself that you rely on your strength and humor.*) How does tone help Angelou express her ideas? (*Sample responses: Angelou's message concerns freedom from fear. Her tone is strong and confident. The rhyme scheme and word choice add humor, which reinforces the strength and confidence.*)

**QUICK CHECK.** Have students identify the tone of the following passage. (*Sample: Hopeful, buoyant; the writer states directly that Rafael is "smiling to himself," and "felt renewed." His "dingy old" surroundings seem newly bright and joyous, "washed clean" by a night of rain.*)

The treetops danced in the breeze as Rafael sat on the front steps of his house, drinking coffee and smiling to himself. He felt renewed. The rain in the night had washed everything clean, and the dingy old street sparkled in the morning sunshine.

## Practice and Apply

Practice activities involving tone appear on pp. 320–321.

- Assign **Practice Worksheet A** to students who need more structured activities.
- Assign **Practice Worksheet B** to grade-level and above-level students.

### Sample Answers: Practice Worksheet A

1. The images of night, mist, and the empty streets convey a sense of mystery.
2. The colors are dark and deep, but also soft: they help convey secrecy, mystery, and darkness.
3. The image of whispering skyscrapers conveys secrecy and mystery; also gentle humor, because it is a fantastical idea.
4. The tone is mysterious and secret, a little awed, and rather sweet. It is clearly a fairy story, since skyscrapers don't whisper.

## TONE, CONTINUED

**Sample Answers: Practice Worksheet B**

1. *His tone is lightly sarcastic; Clovis is an exaggeration or caricature of a real person.*
2. *Clovis is also lightly sarcastic; he sincerely believes in the importance of good food, but he exaggerates to make his point. People don't really eat sawdust.*
3. *The tone is lightly sarcastic. The characters treat the frivolous subject of their meal as if it were of vast importance.*
4. *His tone is what makes the story funny.*

**Assess and Reteach**

Use these guidelines to determine if students need the **Reteaching Worksheet**.

- **Practice Worksheet A:** Students should give complete answers, similar to the samples for to at least three questions.
- **Practice Worksheet B:** Students should give complete answers, similar to the samples for to at least three questions.

For students who need reteaching, review the **Student Lesson Summary**. Focus on the **Academic Vocabulary** and work through the **Here's How** steps, using the example on the page and then the passage on **Practice Worksheet A**. Then assign the **Reteaching Worksheet**, p. 322.

**Answer Key: Reteaching Worksheet**

1. *a*
2. *b*
3. *c*
4. *a*
5. *Sample: The tone is friendly, affectionate, and positive. The writer describes Scrooge's nephew as "glowing" and handsome, showing that his appearance is pleasant. He then uses several action verbs to show the character's energy and vitality.*